



## Merajut Rantai Anti-Kolonialisme: Kiai dan Aktivitas Politik Pesantren di Berbek dari Akhir 1800-an hingga Awal 1900-an

*Knitting the Chain of Anti-Colonialism: Kiai and Pesantren's Political Activities in Berbek from the Late 1800s to the Early 1900s*

Ilyas<sup>1✉</sup>, Lesi Maryani<sup>2</sup>, Johan Wahyudhi<sup>3</sup>, Muhammad Zaqi Al Zamani<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1 2</sup>✉ STAI Al-Aqidah Al-Hasyimiyyah Jakarta, <sup>3 4</sup> UIN Syarif Hidayattullah Jakarta

E-mail: [ilyas@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:ilyas@uinjkt.ac.id)<sup>✉</sup>, [maryanilesi89@gmail.com](mailto:maryanilesi89@gmail.com), [johan.wahyudi@uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:johan.wahyudi@uinjkt.ac.id), [muhzaqi29@gmail.com](mailto:muhzaqi29@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

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*This paper explores the role and political activities of kiai and pesantren in Berbek (present-day Nganjuk) during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the context of resistance to Dutch colonialism. Through a social and political history approach, this study explores how kiai and pesantren became the centre of the anti-colonial movement, spread ideas of freedom, and shaped nationalist identity in Berbek society. The results provide deep insights into how the anti-colonial movement developed and forged a strong network in an effort to achieve national independence.*

#### Kata Kunci:

Kiai,  
Pesantren,  
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Tulisan ini mengeksplorasi peran dan aktivitas politik kiai dan pesantren di Berbek (sekarang Nganjuk) pada akhir abad ke-19 dan awal abad ke-20 dalam konteks perlawanan terhadap kolonialisme Belanda. Melalui pendekatan sejarah sosial dan politik, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana kiai dan pesantren menjadi pusat gerakan anti-kolonial, menyebarkan ide-ide kebebasan, dan membentuk identitas nasionalis dalam masyarakat Berbek. Hasilnya memberikan wawasan yang mendalam tentang bagaimana gerakan anti-kolonial berkembang dan membentuk jaringan yang kuat dalam upaya mencapai kemerdekaan nasional.

### INTRODUCTION

The research on anti-colonialism networks, particularly on the political activities of kiai and pesantren in East Java in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, has undeniable significance in the context of understanding the history of anti-colonial struggles in Indonesia. First of all, this research reveals a layer of history that is often forgotten in national historical narratives. East Java played a central role in the resistance against Dutch colonialism, and through this

research, we can better understand how Kiai and Pesantren became pioneers in this struggle.

It is undeniable that it takes a lot of effort to provide new perspectives on the history of Islam in Indonesia, especially in the colonial period. This research brings to life the complexity of the anti-colonial movement in Indonesia. The political activities of kiai and pesantren reflect the diverse strategies used in resistance to colonisation. These involved religious, social, cultural, and political approaches that

significantly shaped the dynamics of the struggle against colonialism.

Pesantren is an important institution for discussing the existence of Islam in the archipelago. This study illuminates the important role of religion and Islamic education in pesantren as the main pillars of the anti-colonial struggle. Kiai, as spiritual and intellectual figures, had a profound influence in shaping national consciousness and community mobilisation. This provides deeper insight into the relationship between religion and politics in the context of Indonesian history (Royani, 2020).

The power of Islam in the realm of indigenous politics is inseparable from the quest for national identity, and this research impacts our understanding of Indonesia's national identity. Kiai and pesantren helped shape an inclusive and multicultural national identity, uniting different ethnic groups, tribes, and religious backgrounds in a common struggle against colonialism. This has important relevance in understanding the pluralistic nature of Indonesia that is still felt today.

Pesantren occupy their own space on the map of political struggle in Indonesia. There are a number of researchers and writers who review the contribution of kiai, santri, or pesantren in the resistance against the Dutch East Indies government. Fahrudin, for example, highlighted the consistent resistance of pesantren to providing education that was open to all classes of indigenous people. The Dutch East Indies government limited pesantren activities with the *Wilde Scholen* policy, labelling them as wild schools, as well as sponsoring zending

activities, namely Christianization in Javanese society.

Against the two policies above, pesantren proved to be able to place themselves intelligently, so that they did not always have implications for open resistance. After the Java War (1825–1830), many pesantren repositioned their resistance, not by providing soldiers to fight with the Dutch East Indies forces but by providing ample opportunities for santri to study various religious sciences so that they could contribute in the intellectual and political fields in the future (Fahrudin, 2020). Unfortunately, Fahrudin discusses this concept in a broader space, while this article highlights the micro aspects of pesantren resistance in Java, namely only those that occurred in Berbek or around the Nganjuk area.

Ozi Setiadi and Zakaria Husin Lubis see the figure of Kiai Haji Raden Asnawi (Kiai Asnawi) as an important centrepiece in the kiai resistance in Kudus, Central Java, in the period before Indonesian Independence. He was known to have fanatical santri and followers who were ready to support orders from their teacher. Kiai Asnawi did not hesitate to openly criticise and engage with other communities in the fight for his ideas. In the case of the construction of a mosque in Kudus, for example, he clashed with the Chinese community, which was supported by the local Dutch East Indies government.

Setiadi and Lubis are also interested in discussing Kiai Asnawi in an intellectual context. He cites a number of works by this kiai that contain social fiqh advice for Muslim communities around the time before the Japanese occupation (1942) to always maintain

their Muslim identity in terms of dress. The act of imitating the European style of dress is considered imitation, or *tasyabbuh*, so it can be used as an indicator that the person who wears it has a tendency to become like a European. This can certainly hurt the struggles of other indigenous brothers (Setiadi and Lubis, 2022).

The focus of Setiadi and Lubis' discussion of Kiai Asnawi is more on the area of Kiai Asnawi's struggle around Kudus and his contribution to the establishment of the mass organisation Nahdhatul Ulama. Because of the semi-biographical nature of the data presentation in the paper, the authors do not reveal the kiai's contributions or struggles elsewhere in Java. Thus, this article is different from the author's research.

Similar to Setiadi and Lubis, Didin Nurul Rosidin and colleagues are also interested in discussing the struggles of local Javanese kiai in the resistance against the colonial army. Something similar happened in mid-20th-century Cirebon. As a growing city, it was filled with the spirit and flow of ideas of great resistance to the injustices of the Dutch East Indies government. Islamic students who were committed to this cause organised themselves into a number of Islamic mass organisations, such as Sarekat Islam, Nahdhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and others. They already knew that their social protest would be stronger if it was organised.

Unfortunately, Didin and friends' article does not capture the life and resistance of Pesantren Kiai in particular. He only mentions a number of names, such as Kiai Abdul Halim, Kiai Muqoyyim from Buntet, Kiai Jatira from Ciwaringin, or Kiai Romli from Balerante, but does not explain further about how the clerics

resisted and how they differed. Paradigmatically, however, Mia Amalia's paper provides an alternative perspective on approaching the theme of local kiai resistance from the perspective of expressions of anti-colonial movements (Rosidin, 2022).

Looking at a number of articles above provides inspiration and ideas to reconstruct how Kiai and Pesantren filled the time of resistance to the Dutch East Indies Government in various regions. Due to the vastness of Indonesia, the chosen locus revolves around Berbek Regency, which is now Nganjuk Regency. The author suspects that here there were a number of popular resistances that were no less heroic than in other places.

## **METHOD**

Research on kiai and pesantren activities in East Java during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries involves a series of important steps to explore their role in the anti-colonial struggle and the formation of national identity. The first step is to identify relevant primary sources, such as historical documents, newspapers of the era, pesantren records, and kiai writings that relate to the time context (Madjid and Wahyudi, 2014).

The next step is an analysis of the historical context. This involves an in-depth understanding of the conditions of East Java during Dutch colonisation, the local political dynamics, and the economic and social factors that influenced pesantren and kiai. Knowledge of this background will provide a solid basis for analysing Kiai activities and views.

Furthermore, researchers need to conduct biographical studies of key kiai who played a

central role in the anti-colonial struggle. This includes an examination of their backgrounds, education, thoughts, and political activities. Then, it is important to analyse the role of pesantren as educational institutions and centres for the dissemination of anti-colonial thought. This includes an examination of the curriculum, teaching methods, and the role of pesantren in mobilising the community.

A literature review is also needed to understand the role of pesantren in the historical and religious context of Indonesia, as well as kiai thought in Islamic theology and politics. Furthermore, researchers should examine the role of kiai in local or national political organisations and anti-colonial movements. This includes analysing their speeches, writings, and contributions to formulating resistance strategies.

Once the data is collected, the final step is data interpretation to understand the impact of kiai and pesantren activities in knitting the anti-colonial chain in East Java. With these steps, the research will produce a deeper understanding of the role of kiai and pesantren in East Java's anti-colonial history and their impact on the struggle for independence and the development of Indonesia's national identity more broadly (Ryandono, 2018).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Pesantren in Berbek play a very important role in advocating for the rights of peasants and factory workers. The kiai (village clerics) and their santri, with their social position and influence, have a significant responsibility as agents of change in their communities. They are

not just religious teachers who teach the teachings of Islam, but also leaders in social protest who fight for the economic and social rights of their community. The pesantren in Berbek are not isolated entities; they are involved in a network of similar movements across East Java and Central Java.

The kiai in the pesantren played a leading role in defending the rights of peasants and factory workers. They use religious knowledge and Islamic ethics to strengthen their arguments in favour of social justice. In some cases, Kiai not only became leaders in social protests but also facilitated connections and cooperation with similar movements in other regions. This creates a broader and stronger movement that fights for economic and social rights at the regional level.

Through their role as agents of change, kiai and pesantren in Berbek created a social dynamic that could result in real change in the lives of farmers and labourers. By uniting the poor and denouncing economic injustice, they helped shape opinions and social pressure that could influence government and corporate policies. Over time, the contributions of these pesantrens increasingly influenced positive social and economic changes for their communities and shaped a larger movement for social change in the East and Central Java regions.

In the Dutch East Indies in the 19th century, education played a significant dual role. Firstly, as a tool to educate oneself, education became an important pillar for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and critical thinking. People began to realise that education was the key to improving their living conditions and opening up

opportunities to challenge oppression. In addition, education also served as a medium of resistance to the arrogance of the Dutch colonial government. The education sector provided a platform for people to develop awareness of their rights and build solidarity in the face of repressive actions by the colonial government.

The social and political context of the Dutch East Indies at the time illustrates the importance of education as an instrument of resistance. The education sector became a platform where people could mobilise together, campaign for ideas of freedom, and build national consciousness. Educational institutions and educators were often catalysts for social and political change, inspiring a spirit of resistance to colonialism and spreading ideas of justice and human rights.

In the context of Berbek, education became a tool for the local community to resist Dutch domination. It provided insights, built collective awareness of the rights of the marginalised, and created space for people to organise themselves in the face of colonial oppression. As a result, education provided not only knowledge but also the courage for individuals and communities to challenge colonial arrogance, fight for their rights, and mobilise solidarity in their resistance.

The majority of Nganjuk residents are still heavily involved in agricultural activities. This has an impact on their propensity to attend school. Religious schools, including pesantren, offer a strategic opportunity to obtain an education that encompasses ethical and religious teachings. Pesantren function as inclusive educational institutions, allowing individuals from different backgrounds to acquire the same knowledge. After completing their

education in pesantren, individuals are equipped to take on the role of religious teachers in rural communities, thus enhancing the social status of their families.

Religious scholars with the titles of kiai and hajj, who are the religious authorities of Islam, are considered a respectable and exclusive group in Berbek society. They are honoured individuals who usually rise to leadership positions in society. The reputation of a kiai is determined by the quality of his students and the pesantren he runs. Haji are renowned not only for their religious prominence but also for their wealth and benevolence.

Typically, colonial records indicate that hajjis often incite hatred against European rule. They were orators who would incite the population to hate and engage in conflict against the company. Hence, they were often referred to as the instigators and brains of the resistance against colonial rule (Ensering, 1987). Surprisingly, according to a colonial document, it is said that the attitude of the Hajj in Berbek was largely positive and cooperative towards the colonial government. Moreover, they consistently refrained from committing theft or other immoral acts (Welvaart Commissie, 1911).

After the Java War, there was little resistance in the Berbek region. Local resistance has been rare since the convoys of troops led by the Regent of Bojonegoro, Tumenggung Sosrodilogo, during the Java War that took place around Berbek. It seems that the supporters of Prince Diponegoro chose to keep quiet and engage in alternative activities, such as establishing padepokan, or pesantren. There is very little information about them, as certain people lived in quiet communities and refrained

from engaging in activities that would attract the attention of the colonial government, let alone initiate acts of resistance ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_3MTpyzviM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_3MTpyzviM)).

Pesantren are informal indigenous educational institutions from a colonial perspective. They were categorised as wild schools or *wilde scholen*. Pesantren teachers are not included in the teaching force that requires consideration from the state. The position of pesantren demands economic independence, as they do not get financial support from the government like public schools (Fahrudin, 2020).

Pakuncen village in Kertosono is a perdikan village rich in history as one of the oldest centres of Islamic education in Berbek. The establishment of this settlement is closely linked to the presence of Kiai Nurjalipah, a religious leader who was a direct descendant of Sunan Gunung Jati and a disciple of Sunan Drajad. He is said to have served as the leader of Pakuncen from 1710 to 1760. Kiai Nurjalipah's daily routine was to be an educator in the neighbourhood. In addition to fulfilling his family's needs, he was also involved in agricultural work. In addition, Kiai Nurjalipah also taught martial arts to his students.

Pakuncen can be described as a village with a strong connection to the pesantren tradition. For this reason, it is commonly referred to as *Kauman*, an area inhabited mostly by kiai, santri, or people who adhere to Islamic jurisprudence in their daily activities (Yusuf, 2022).

Kertosono is a vibrant area characterised by active commercial and social enterprises, which

also include the presence of Islamic boarding schools. The area is adjacent to Jombang, which is also home to several well-known Islamic boarding schools, such as Pesantren Paculgowang and Pesantren Keras. It is very likely that there is a movement of santri or kiai in both areas, resulting in a convergence of local Islamic practises. Unlike the neighbouring villages in Berbek, which mostly adhere to *Islam kejawen*, a manifestation of Javanese Islam, these villagers practise *Islam putihan*, similar to those who live in the pesantren and its surroundings.

The pesantren tradition in Berbek and Nganjuk predates the Diponegoro War. Pesantren Mojosari is widely regarded as one of the oldest pesantren in Nganjuk, founded around 1720. Kiai Ali Imron was the founder. The pesantren was established due to Kiai Ali Imron's concern about the absence of a place to study various Islamic disciplines in the Mojosari area. Initially, he established a simple recitation class that only served the local population.

Mojosari, like other areas in Berbek and Kediri, is a rural area surrounded by vast rice fields. The majority of the population relies on rice farming, either as landowners or as cultivators. Kiai Ali Imron regularly interacted with the farmers and delved into their daily experiences. He was renowned for his unwavering dedication to agriculture, just like the people of Mojosari in general. Kiai Ali Imron's ability to empathise with the locals was similar to that of the farmers, which allowed him to gain a deep understanding of their circumstances (<https://nunganjuk.or.id/sosok-istimewa-kiai-mansyur-sholeh-mojosari-nganjuk/>).

In contrast to the atmosphere in the Berbek pesantren, which was more cautious in spawning ideas of anti-colonialism, outside the walls of the pesantren, people were more free to encourage acts of sabotage and terror as a part of resistance against the company. Although this method was not fully successful in expelling the colonisers, it was at least able to give a shock effect to the establishment that they tried to install.

Discussing the resistance of kiai in Berbek cannot be separated from the large influx of kiai and tarekat teachers after the Diponegoro War. In the latter years of the nineteenth century, the Colonial Verslag between 1800 and 1900 reported the movement of people to Berbek driven by various interests, ranging from work to education. It is likely that the movement of kiai and tarekat teachers from other areas to Berbek was included in the social phenomena recorded by these colonial documents.

In their development, some kiai and tarekat teachers were passive and some were active in voicing their resistance to the position of the Dutch East Indies Government. The passive ones usually expressed their resistance through hermitages and Islamic boarding schools that educated people in various religious sciences to prepare them for what might be more difficult times due to the company's subjective politics.

Armed with religious knowledge, it was hoped that the Santri could formulate various alternative struggle formulas. One reflection of this effort can be seen in the era of the National Movement, starting in 1900, where many pesantren educated people, such as HOS Cokroaminoto, KH Hashim Asy'ari, and KH Zainal Arifin, were born as intellectual products

of pesantren who fought not only on the battlefield but also at the negotiating tables.

Returning to the existence of the movement of kiai and tarekat teachers to Berbek. In addition to establishing pesantren, some of them immediately fostered the surrounding community to launch attacks on the opposing camps. Usually, this was motivated by a desire for change, and an effective way to win the sympathy of the local population was by promoting the ideology of Ratu Adil, or messianism.

It is undeniable that there were kiai and tarekat teachers who encouraged the resistance of their people armed with messianistic ideas. One of them was found in Blitar. On August 16, 1888, *De Locomotief* reported on preparations made by around 73 migrants from Solo who had equipment such as flags, keris, and amulets. Among them were Kiai and Hajjis. Resistance between them and the company had not yet taken place, as company intelligence had detected their movements. Further information revealed that they were going to establish a new kingdom in Birowo, a place in the mountain range to the south of Blitar. With such a large mass, it is not impossible that this number could grow even larger and touch other districts, not least Berbek. The phrase "new kingdom" is synonymous with establishing the kingdom of God, which is close to the ideology of Ratu Adil (*De Locomotief*, August 16, 1888).

In September 1861, a tobacco warehouse belonging to Mr. W was reported to have caught fire. The loss suffered was about f 5,000. More than 150,000 pikuls of hanging dried tobacco were burned down. Such cases are rare. The police are still investigating this case. It is

suspected that the act was committed by a group of people who were unhappy with the presence of European businessmen in the area. It is too early to label this case as part of the political expression of kiai and tarekat teachers in Berbek. However, if we look at the anatomy of the news, especially religious figures who provide an understanding of anti-colonialism to the community. Then this case was part of a form of sabotage carried out by indigenous groups, which did not rule out the possibility of being related to a group of fighters from the background of kiai and tarekat teachers (*Java Bode*, 8 September 1861).

In 1907, the resistance of the pesantren was initiated by Kiai Dharmojoyo from Dukuh Bendungan, Baron Village, Berbek Regency. This resistance ended with the defeat of the Kiai, but the impact of this resistance was widespread throughout the archipelago and even the Netherlands. The Dutch East Indies government immediately organised security in a number of public places, one of which was to request that the manager of Berbek Station maintain security around the station. For security, the manager sent his family to Kertosono, while equipping them with weapons, to stand guard in case of an attack from Kiai Dharmojoyo's followers. (*Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 12 February 1907).

One of the victims of Kiai Dharmojoyo's resistance was the assistant resident of Berbek named Henny. Dharmojoyo's troops realised that his position as a colonial official was vital. Therefore, attacks on him intensified. It is rumoured that he was seriously injured in the battle, causing him to lose his little finger. It is

reported that the Dutch East Indies government won the sympathy of the Javanese people by caring for the victims of the battle, not only soldiers from the colonial camp but also family members and followers of Kiai Dharmojoyo (*Het Nieuws van Den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 28 February 1907).

Two years after Kiai Dharmojoyo's riot, the Dutch East Indies government put security in place in a number of places. The Warujayeng area became a place considered unsafe by Dutch interests because it was a traffic area for *kecu* (bandits), who often disturbed colonial interests and local residents. The Kertosono area, ideally a bustling place because of the colonial government centre there, became a locus of high crime. The Dutch East Indies government called this spot a den of robbers (*Het Volk: Dagblad voor De Arbeiderspartij*, 12 August 1908).

The *kecu* and robbery activities in Kertosono and Warujayeng were not merely criminal acts but part of the people's resistance to colonial policies. Colonial history in the Dutch East Indies was characterised by the implementation of oppressive and exploitative policies towards the indigenous people. In this context, actions that appear as 'crimes' can be seen as a form of resistance. This is similar to resistance movements in other European colonies, where actions deemed subversive by the colonial authorities were actually expressions of discontent and a desire for independence.

The choice to resort to robbery and sabotage was a tactic of resistance in the face of a well-trained and solid colonial military force. In a situation where direct confrontation often ended



in defeat, actions such as robbery became a way to undermine colonial power. It is a guerrilla tactic that disrupts order and security, forces the colonial government to divide its attention and resources, and ultimately weakens its ability to control and oppress.

Acts of kecu and robbery also had a symbolic and psychological dimension. They became symbols of resistance to and dissatisfaction with colonialism. In this context, even the failure of a robbery could have a significant psychological impact, galvanising a spirit of resistance among the people. This shows that, although the colonials had military power, they could not fully control or quell the spirit of popular resistance.

Popular resistance through activities such as robbery and sabotage indicates a long-term strategy against colonial rule. These were not just sporadic attacks, but part of an ongoing movement. These actions may not have always been successful, but their consistency and resilience in resisting created sustained pressure on the colonial authorities, making them constantly wary and uncomfortable.

While in the context of resistance, kecu and robbery activities can be seen as legitimate tactics, there are also moral and ethical dilemmas involved. These actions often cause harm to parties not directly involved in the conflict, including civilians who are not participating in the resistance. This raises questions about ethical boundaries in the struggle against colonisation and the extent to which violence can be justified as a means of resistance.

Acts of robbery and sabotage by the people had an impact on colonial strategy and policy. With increased resistance activity, colonial

authorities are forced to change their tactics, often by increasing security and repression, which in turn can strengthen anti-colonial sentiments among the people. This creates a cycle of resistance and repression that affects the socio-political dynamics of the region.

In analysing the activities of kecu and robbery as forms of resistance, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the situation. While such acts carry negative consequences, especially in humanitarian and moral terms, they are also a reflection of the discontent and injustice felt by colonised peoples. They are an important part of the broader narrative of resistance to colonialism, which must be understood in its historical and political context.

Warujayeng and Kertosono, in the late nineteenth century, were well-known centres of traditional Islamic education, with pesantren led by respected kiai. These pesantren were not only centres for learning the Koran but also gathering places for the community for various religious and social activities. The kiai's role as central figures in community life confirms their wide and deep influence. They are not only regarded as spiritual leaders but also as advisors and leaders in many aspects of life. This forms a unique social structure where pesantren activities and the role of kiai are at the core of community dynamics.

In the colonial context, the colonial media played an important role in shaping public perception. Field research revealed that the colonial media deliberately portrayed Warujayeng and Kertosono as 'dens of robbers', a propaganda strategy to delegitimize pesantren and reduce the influence of kiai in the eyes of the wider community. The aim was to create a

bad image of these areas, especially in the eyes of the Dutch East Indies government and the middle and upper classes. This strategy was not only about creating a stigma but also an attempt to control and limit the influence of pesantren, which might be perceived as a threat to colonial stability and control.

The impact of this propaganda was quite significant. Newspaper readers from all walks of life, especially those from the colonial government and the upper middle class, became increasingly wary and cautious of areas with pesantren. This not only affected their views on Warujayeng and Kertosono but also on pesantren in general. The creation of this negative image succeeded in instilling a sense of suspicion and fear, which indirectly reduced the influence and social and political power of the pesantren and kiai. In the long run, this can change social dynamics and reduce the capacity of pesantren as centres of learning and cultural resistance to colonialism (Rak, 2007).

In 1888, it was reported that, for some time, the residents of Kertosono could rejoice in the excellent street lighting. At a distance of a few hundred paces, there is on average a large, brightly lit lantern, which is hung on a tree with an accompanying iron rod. In Kertosono, there are a great many narrow alleys and corridors where bad people and criminals live and hide. Lanterns are hung mainly in places where these corridors intersect with the main road, which is necessary.

This illumination also helps to provide access to light, especially during the western monsoon season. Despite the fact that people cannot see anything in front of their eyes and have a high

probability of ending up in mud puddles or trenches when they go out at night,

The provision of these lamps was done by Henny, who was then serving as the kontrolir of Kertosono. To realise his idea, he encouraged a number of parties to pay lighting fees of around \$600 per month. Some Chinese people reportedly resigned after signing up. In Henny's eyes, the Chinese were actually wealthy businessmen or people, but their personalities tended to be stingy. They always think that they will eventually get a streetlight. It was also reported that Henny wanted to open up opportunities for a public burial ground in Kertosono (*De Locomotief*, November 5, 1888).

In 1896, the Dutch East Indies Government honoured a number of village heads or native officials in Central Java or East Java, as follows:

. . . for his years of loyal service and diligent devotion to duty, the Bronze Star for his loyalty and services was awarded to: Sutodikromo, Village Head of Singonegaran in Kediri District and Afdeeling; Kamsari, Village Head of Sonorodo, Mojoroto District, Kediri Afdeeling; Sosemito, Village Head of Demangan and Sosemito Village Head of Karangsalae, Jamban District, Kediri Afdeeling; Singoreso, Village Head of Ngampel, Papar District, Kediri Afdeeling; Somejo, Village Head of Ngipik and Singodimejo, Village Head of Kebanagoen (Kebanagung or Kebon Agung? ) Tulungagung District, Ngrowo Afdeeling; Joyodimejo, Village Chief of Ngunut, Ngunut District, Afdeeling Ngrowo, Kromoprawiro, Village Chief of Babadan and Prawirosentono, Village Chief of Pakuncen, Pakuncen District, Afdeeling Ngrowo, Tamenggolo, Former Village Chief of Suwaru, Cokromo, Village Chief of Kundung and Surokromo, Village Chief of Sambitan, Tanggul District, Afdeeling Ngrowo, Somejo, Village Chief of Sanggrahan, Noyosemito, former Village Chief of Kandenan, Hirodikromo, Pecuk

Village Chief and Hirodimejo, former Saman Village Chief, Wajak District, Afdeeling Ngrowo, Setrodimejo, former Kradenan Village Chief, Hirokromo, Srabah Village Chief, Wirioimejo, Jaban Village Chief and Somokario, Morangan Village Chief, Kalangbrek District, Afdeeling Ngrowo, Kriomengolo, Kedungwaru Village Chief and Mertojoyo, Kawedusan Village Chief, Ngasinan District, Afdeeling Trengalek, Ranodikromo, former village head of Panggungsan; Joyowirio, former village head of Nglandean, Pakis District; Afdeeling Trenggalek; Cokromenggolo, Village Head of Mlagen, Kampak District; Afdeeling Trengalek; Setrowiriono, Village Head of Bangun; and Sonomejo, former village head of Tamboro, Panggul District; Trenggalek Afdeeling; Todiwirio, Village Chief of Patian (Patian Rowo) Kertosono District; Berbek Afdeeling; Kromosemito, Village Chief of Watudandang Warujayeng District; Berbek Afdeeling, all in the Kediri Residency (Java Bode, 19 June 1896).

The awarding of the title "Bronze Star" to a number of village heads by the Dutch East Indies government was an act that illustrated the relationship between the colonial government and loyal village heads during the colonial period. This title was given in recognition of their loyalty and devotion over the years. An analysis of this title reveals several important aspects that can be understood in the context of colonial history.

Firstly, the title reflects the central role of village heads in maintaining security and order in their villages. Village heads functioned as agents of the colonial government in carrying out the task of maintaining security from the intrusion of robbers or suspected robbers in their areas. They had a great responsibility for the security of the population and property in the village. The awarding of the "Bronze Star" title was evidence that the colonial government valued their vital role in maintaining order.

Secondly, the awarding of this title also indicates the colonial government's attempt to strengthen their control over rural areas. By rewarding loyal village heads, the colonial government may have hoped to retain the loyalty and cooperation of local leaders. This would help them to administer and control rural areas more effectively.

Thirdly, the awarding of this title also reflects recognition of village heads who have successfully maintained stability in their areas. This might be expected to incentivize other village heads to work well to maintain security and order in their villages. As such, the awarding of this title may have had a positive impact on village governance under colonial rule.

Fourth, the awarding of the "Bintang Perunggu" title can also be interpreted as an attempt by the colonial government to build personal ties between the village heads and the government. By individually honouring them, the government may have hoped to strengthen personal relationships and facilitate communication between the colonial administration and the village heads.

It should be noted that the awarding of these titles must be seen in the context of the broader history of colonialism. While it may be considered an honour, it does not change the fact that the Dutch East Indies was a colony that controlled Indonesian land and resources. Therefore, the relationship between the colonial government and village heads was always based on inequality and exploitation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Dutch East Indies occupation of Java, especially Berbek Regency (including Nganjuk),

brought the community to a new phenomenon in life. The traditional pattern of Javanese society that was previously under the umbrella of simplicity and gentleness changed into a spirit of building a new ethos that was closer to the survivalian ethos because the colonial government always put pressure on all aspects of life.

The conversion of rice fields and community plantations into industrial plantations that supported European and Chinese factories is thought to be the main cause of the birth of social change in Berbek. The peasant community, which was increasingly losing its breath of life, began to rise to adjust to the circumstances that were increasingly not in their favour. They responded to an extraordinarily different life, from previously being sharecroppers to being required to choose to become factory labourers if they wanted to earn a better living.

Not all parties gave up on the situation. Some groups of people, mainly the pesantren, chose to survive and develop themselves in different ways. The Kiai are a wealthy community elite, as evidenced by their ability to provide for their students. The Santri were given advice and direction that by pursuing religious teaching, their future could be achieved, and at least they could escape the shackles of ignorance launched by the colonial government. Education was an expensive product that could only be accessed by noble groups. Therefore, Santri from poor families chose to develop themselves and study in Pesantren to build a better life.

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